

*Calls on BP to Support Non-Profits in South Louisiana Treating Workers & Families*

June 25, 2010

WASHINGTON, DC — Today, U.S. Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) called on BP to seriously address the rising number of mental health problems in Gulf communities caused by the oil disaster. Congressman Melancon noted that in recent town hall meetings he has held since the oil leak began, he heard from residents who said they have been overly stressed, anxious, or and/or depressed because of the disaster. Last month, Congressman Melancon also [asked the federal government](#) for assistance in establishing temporary mental health services to help residents cope with the BP oil disaster in the Gulf.

In a letter to BP's chairman, Congressman Melancon wrote, **"As we enter the third month of the Deepwater Horizon oil leak, it is becoming increasingly clear that Louisianians living along the Gulf are not only suffering economically from this disaster, but also struggling emotionally from the stress and uncertainty of this tragedy."**

Melancon continued, **"I implore you to seriously address the issue of mental and behavioral health problems being identified along the Gulf Coast and specifically in Louisiana. These problems are directly related to the disaster your company has caused.....Today I call on you to make a significant contribution to non-profit organizations in the area which are on the ground identifying and helping families in need."**

Congressman Melancon concluded, **"Your company has the financial resources available to ensure that mental and behavioral health services are provided. Last year, BP's top five executives received a total of almost \$10 million in bonus payments. Even if just one of your Board Members would donate his or her bonus to mental and behavioral health services, hundreds of residents could receive the help they so desperately need."**

[Click here](#) to view the full letter.

Congressman Melancon also sent BP's Chairman a letter from Tulane University's School of Medicine, which operates the New Orleans East LA Community Health Center (NOELA CHC), describing their need for any additional funding to assist with their mental health outreach to the Vietnamese community. [Click here](#) to view the letter from Tulane.

Congressman Melancon has worked to bring attention to the health needs of Louisianians impacted by the oil leak in the Gulf. He pushed the federal government to deploy a mobile health care clinic to Venice, La, to treat and screen workers and residents affected by the BP oil leak in the Gulf. The clinic arrived May 31st, following requests from Congressman Melancon to both [the President](#) and [the Secretary of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#) .

Congressman Melancon has also called on BP to suspend bonus payments to top-ranking executives and apply the money toward helping Louisianians impacted by the oil spill in the Gulf. [In a letter to BP](#) Chairman Carl-Henrik Svanberg, Congressman Melancon noted that BP CEO Tony Hayward's 2009 bonus of \$3 million would cover the cost of salaries for 50 offshore

workers who have lost their jobs due to the moratorium imposed because of the oil spill.

Congressman Melancon represents in Congress the areas of coastal Louisiana most directly affected by the oil leak, including Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary and southern Jefferson Parishes. The Deepwater Horizon platform was located 50 miles off the coast of Louisiana's Third Congressional District.

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